setting a user's standard rest time or a rest interval time by the server device;

sending an instruction for melody sound to the terminal device; and

receiving the sent instruction for the melody sound by the terminal device to ring a rest promoting melody sound for urging a worker's rest by an attached sound source device.

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-21 and 23-40 are presented for consideration, with Claims 1 and 21 being independent.

The specification and abstract have been reviewed and amended to correct minor informalities and improve their idiomatic English form. In addition, Claims 1 and 21 have been amended to include editorial changes and changes to further distinguish Applicants' invention from the cited art. Editorial changes have also been made to the dependent claims. Claims 2 and 22 have been cancelled.

In amending the claims, the objection to Claim 1 in paragraph 2 of the Office Action and the rejections of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, have been taken into consideration. The amended claims are submitted to be in full compliance with the particularity and distinctness requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Accordingly, the objection to Claim 1 and the rejection of Claims 1-20, including Claim 16, under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, should be withdrawn.

Claims 9 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, for allegedly containing non-enabling subject matter. This rejection is respectfully traversed. With respect to Claim 9, it is submitted that one skilled in the art would, because of the nature of the invention and the state of the prior art, be fully capable of displaying on the screen a diagram image indicating an entrance door to the office and displaying the visitor's working situation in a window portion of the door. Likewise, one skilled in the art would be readily able to provide an office system capable of moving the screen to a virtual office of a different organization in accordance with the indication of the organization as recited in Claim 16 without undue experimentation. The specification beginning on page 30, line 15 provides additional information on this feature of Claim 16. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 9 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-5, 8-13, 16, 21-25 and 28-33 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being obvious over Ludwig '294. Claims 6, 7, 18-20, 26, 27 and 38-40 were rejected as allegedly being obvious over Ludwig in view of Brunson '823 and Gerrszber '916, and Claims 14, 15, 17, 34, 35 and 37 were rejected as allegedly being obvious over Ludwig in view of Palmer '683. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Applicants' invention as set forth in Claim 1 relates to a distributed office system provided with terminal devices installed for a plurality of users and a server device connected to the terminal devices via a communication channel for displaying information on a screen of a terminal device of each of the users. The system includes works situation display means for collectively displaying an information aggregate including at least two types of information for each user, including the user's working situation image and character information concerning the user's workout situation on the screen of the terminal device, and a virtual room

display means for displaying, for each user, diagram images indicating the user's virtual single-room office on the screen of the terminal device of the user.

Claim 21 relates to a method of managing a distributed office system provided with terminal devices installed for a plurality of users and a server device connected to the terminal devices via a communication channel for displaying information on a screen of the terminal device in the distributed office system. The method includes the steps of displaying diagram images for each user indicating the user's virtual single-room office on the screen of the terminal device of the user, and collectively displaying an information aggregate of at least two types of information. The information includes a user's working situation image and character information concerning the user's working situation.

In accordance with Applicants' claimed invention an efficient and productive distributed office system can be provided.

The primary citation to Ludwig relates to a multimedia collaboration system that displays an information aggregate of another user's working station. Ludwig discloses using geographically dispersed multimedia LANs that are interconnected by a WAN. Figures 2A and 2B are said to provide information regarding another user's workstation and show users in different windows.

In contrast to Applicants' claimed invention, however, Ludwig is not understood to teach or suggest, inter alia, displaying two types of information for each user, including a user's working situation and character information concerning a user's working situation on the screen of the user, and displaying a user's virtual single-room office on the screen of the user. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 1-5, 8-13, 16, 21-25 and 28-33 under 35 U.S.C. §103 is respectfully requested.
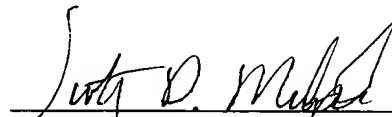
The secondary citation to <u>Brunson</u> relates to a video and telephony messaging system and was cited for its teaching of a universal mailbox for storing messages. The <u>Gerrszber</u> patent is cited in paragraph 10 but not discussed, and therefore appears not to have been relied on in rejecting the claims. Finally, <u>Palmer</u> relates to a video teleconferencing network and was cited for its teaching of allowing users to optimize the delivery of multimedia content. The secondary citations fail, however, to compensate for the deficiencies in <u>Ludwig</u> as discussed above with respect to Applicants' independent claims. Therefore, without conceding the propriety of modifying <u>Ludwig</u> in view of one or more of the secondary citations, such combinations still fail to teach or suggest Applicants' claimed invention. Thus, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of Claims 6, 7, 14, 15, 17-20, 26-27, 34, 35 and 37-40 under 35 U.S.C. §103 are respectfully requested.

Accordingly, it is submitted that independent Claims 1 and 21 are patentable over the cited art. In addition, dependent Claims 3-20 and 23-40 set forth additional features of Applicants' invention. Independent consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of this application is deemed to be in order and such action is respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE TO SPECIFICATION

The paragraph starting at page 6, line 4 and ending at line 10 has been amended as follows:

As described above, when the worker belonging to the organization works in the home office, it has heretofore been usual to use the telephone set, the facsimile transmitter/receiver, the personal computer and each installed communication application software to proceed [the working] <u>with the work</u> while communicating with the other workers.

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE TO THE ABSTRACT

The Abstract of the Disclosure section starting at page 68, line 2 and ending at line 20 has been amended as follows:

[Conventional apparatuses and communication application software are not developed to support distributed working, but are developed on the premise of the office and working mode of aggregate working, and it is therefore difficult to use them for an efficient distributed working. Moreover, in the distributed working in which the apparatuses and communication application software are disposed in a conventional home office, working efficiency is deteriorated, and as an additional problem, the amount of communications itself is decreased. Therefore, an object of the present invention is to provide a]

A distributed office system and a method of managing the system[, in which] includes a plurality of user terminal devices installed in different places[,] and usually one host server device [are] connected via a communication network[, so that a]. The plurality of offices distributed in the different places can entirely function as one office space.

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE TO CLAIMS

1.   (Amended) A distributed office system provided with terminal devices installed for a plurality of users, and a server device connected to the terminal devices via a communication channel, for displaying information on a screen of a terminal device of each of the users, [the information relating to the other users of said each user,] comprising:

working situation display means for collectively displaying an information aggregate including at least [three] two types of information for each user, including [an other] the user's working situation image, and character information concerning [an other] the user's working situation[, and a diagram image indicating an other user's virtual single-room office as said information concerning the other user] on the screen of the terminal device of [said] the user; and

virtual room display means for displaying, for each user, diagram images indicating the user's virtual single-room office on the screen of the terminal device of the user.

2.   Cancelled.

3.   (Amended) The distributed office system according to claim [2] 1, wherein selecting [of] the user to be displayed in [said] the virtual office [area], and changing of arrangement of a display position of the information concerning the user are performed by a specific user.

4.   (Amended) The distributed office system according to claim [2] 1,

wherein said working situation display means displays a virtual user common space area

including a meeting room, a training room, a data room, and a lounge with [said] the virtual

office [area] on the screen of [said] the terminal device.

6.   (Amended) The distributed office system according to claim 1,

wherein when telephone communication is performed via a telephone channel board disposed in

said server device, [the] said working situation display means displays character information

indicating that the user is on the telephone as said character information concerning [the other]

another user's working situation.

7.   (Amended) The distributed office system according to claim 1,

wherein when [said other] a user is resting, said working situation display means does not

display [said other] the resting user's working situation image, and displays an image indicating

that [said other] the user is resting.

8.   (Amended) The distributed office system according to claim 1, further

comprising:

selecting means for selecting [said other] another user's virtual single-

room office on [said] the screen;

visitation input means for inputting visitation to [said] the selected

other user's virtual single-room office; and

virtual single-room office display means for, when [said] the visitation

is inputted, displaying the inside of the virtual single-room office of a visited user on the screen

of the terminal device of a visitor, wherein

the screen in which the inside of the virtual single-room office of [said]

the visited user is displayed includes a visited user's working situation image, and a diagram

image meaning fittings or fixtures of the visited user.

9.   (Amended) The distributed office system according to claim 1, further

comprising:

selecting means for selecting [said other] another user's virtual single-

room office on [said] the screen;

visitation input means for inputting visitation to [said] the selected

[other] user's virtual single-room office; and

office display means for, when [said] the visitation is inputted,

displaying the inside of the virtual single-room office of a visitor on the screen of the terminal

device of a visited user, wherein

the screen in which the inside of the virtual single-room office of [said]

the visitor is displayed includes a visitor's working situation image, a diagram image meaning

visitor's fittings or fixtures, and a diagram image indicating an entrance door to the office, and

[said] the visitor's working situation image is displayed in a window portion of the door.

10.   (Amended) The distributed office system according to claim 1, further

comprising:

selecting means for selecting [said other] another user's virtual single-

room office on [said] the screen;

input means for inputting visitation or telephone to [said] the selected

[other] user's virtual single-room office; and

telephone communication means by which when the visitation or the

telephone to [said] the other user's virtual single-room office is inputted, [said] the server device

makes telephone calls to telephone subscriber numbers registered beforehand of both the users

via a telephone channel board, so that telephone communication can be realized between the

users.

11.   (Amended) The distributed office system according to claim 1,

wherein said terminal device comprises:

cameras for photographing users' images;

converting means for converting the users' images photographed by

[the] said cameras to compressed images with a predetermined number of pixels; and

transmitting means for transmitting the converted images to said server device,

said server device comprises:

generating means for generating a reduced compressed image by reducing the number of pixels of the received image; and

transmitting means for transmitting the generated reduced compressed images to said terminal device, and

[said] the transmitted reduced compressed images are displayed in the screens of said terminal device as [said] the other users' working situation images.

12.   (Amended) The distributed office system according to claim 8, wherein said terminal device comprises:

a camera for photographing users' images;

converting means for converting the users' images photographed by [the] said camera to compressed images with a predetermined number of pixels; and

transmitting means for transmitting the converted image to said server device, and

said server device comprises:

transmitting means for transmitting the compressed image of the visited user to the visitor's terminal device.

13.   (Amended) The distributed office system according to claim 9,

wherein said terminal device comprises:

cameras for photographing users' images;

converting means for converting the users' images photographed by

[the] said camera to compressed images with a predetermined number of pixels; and

transmitting means for transmitting the converted image to said server

device, and

said server device comprises:

transmitting means for transmitting the compressed image of the visited

user to the visitor's terminal device.

14.   (Amended) The distributed office system according to claim 1,

wherein when the working situation image of [the other] another user using a portable terminal

device having no camera as said terminal device is displayed, said working situation display

means displays a user's image registered beforehand in said server device.

15.   (Amended) The distributed office system according to claim 1,

wherein said working situation display means comprises setting means for setting a frame rate by

a user's operation when [said other] another user's working situation image photographed by a

camera disposed on the terminal device is received and displayed.

16.   (Amended) The distributed office system according to claim 3, further

comprising:

indicating means for indicating an organization on the screen in which

the virtual single-room offices of the users belonging to the same organization are displayed in

the same virtual office [area]; and

moving means for moving [said] the screen to the virtual office area of

[the] a different organization in accordance with the indication by said indicating means.

17.   (Amended) The distributed office system according to claim 14,

further comprising:

referring means for referring to profile concerning a screen display

ability of a portable information terminal registered in said server device;

generating means for generating [optimum] display data for screen

display of said portable information terminal by said server device; and

transmitting means for transmitting the generated display data to said

portable information terminal, wherein

said portable information terminal displays images of the virtual single-

room office, a virtual office area and a user common space area in accordance with [said] the

received display data.

18.   (Amended) The distributed office system according to claim 1,

wherein [said] the character information concerning the working situation is inputted by a

telephone set ten key, in addition to by said terminal device.

20.   (Amended) The distributed office system according to claim 1,

wherein said server device comprises:

setting means for setting a user's standard rest time or a rest interval

time; and

sound instruction sending means for sending an instruction for melody

sound to said terminal device, and

said terminal device comprises:

a sound source device; and

ringing means for receiving [said] the sent instruction for melody sound

to ring a rest promoting melody sound for urging a worker's rest.

21.   (Amended) A method of managing a distributed office system

provided with terminal devices installed for a plurality of users, and a server device connected to

the terminal devices via a communication channel for displaying information [concerning the

other user] on a screen of the terminal device of [said] the user in the distributed office system,

comprising the steps of:

<u>displaying diagram images for each user indicating a user's virtual</u>

<u>single-room office on the screen of the terminal device of the user;</u>

collectively displaying an information aggregate of at least [three] <u>two</u>

types of information<u>, for each diagram image</u> including [an other] <u>a</u> user's working situation

image, <u>and</u> character information concerning the [other] user's working situation[, and a diagram

image indicating an other user's virtual single-room office as said information concerning the

other user on the screen of the terminal device of said user].

22.   Cancelled.

23.   (Amended) The distributed office system managing method according

to claim [22] <u>21</u>, wherein selecting of the [user] <u>users</u> to be displayed in [said] <u>the</u> virtual office

[area], and changing of arrangement of a display position of the information concerning the user

are performed by a specific user.

24.   (Amended) The distributed office system managing method according

to claim [22] <u>21</u>, wherein said step of displaying [said] <u>the</u> information concerning the other

user's working situation comprises displaying a virtual user common space area including a

meeting room, a training room, a data room, or a lounge with [said] <u>the</u> virtual office area on the

screen of [said] <u>the</u> terminal device.

25.   (Amended) The distributed office system managing method according

to claim 21, wherein [said] the character information concerning the working situation includes

at least one of a user's name, a present working situation and an operation content, a reason why

the user is not working and a place where the user is, and a future working schedule.

26.   (Amended) The distributed office system managing method according

to claim 21, wherein when telephone communication is performed via a telephone channel board

disposed in [said] the server device, said step of displaying [said] the information concerning the

[other] user's working situation comprises displaying character information indicating that the

user is on the telephone as [said] the character information concerning the [other] user's working

situation.

27.   (Amended) The distributed office system managing method according

to claim 21, wherein said step of displaying [said] the information concerning the [other] user's

working situation comprises, when [said other] the user is resting, not displaying [said other] the

resting user's working situation image, and displaying an image indicating that [said other] the

user is resting.

28.   (Amended) The distributed office system managing method according

to claim 21, further comprising the steps of:

selecting [said other] <u>another</u> user's virtual single-room office on [said] the screen;

inputting visitation to [said] <u>the</u> selected other user's virtual single-room office; and

when [said] <u>the</u> visitation is inputted, displaying the inside of the virtual single-room office of a visited user on the screen of the terminal device of a visitor, wherein

the screen in which the inside of the virtual single-room office of [said] <u>the</u> visited user is displayed includes a visited user's working situation image, and a diagram image meaning fittings or fixtures of the visited user.

29.   (Amended) The distributed office system managing method according to claim 21, further comprising the steps of:

selecting [said other] <u>another</u> user's virtual single-room office on [said] the screen;

inputting visitation to [said] <u>the</u> selected [other] user's virtual single-room office; and

when [said] <u>the</u> visitation is inputted, displaying the inside of the virtual single-room office of a visitor on the screen of the terminal device of a visited user, wherein

the screen in which the inside of the virtual single-room office of [said] <u>the</u> visitor is displayed includes a visitor's working situation image, a diagram image meaning

visitor's fittings or fixtures, and a diagram image indicating an entrance door to the office, and

[said] the visitor's working situation image is displayed in a window portion of the door.

30.   (Amended) The distributed office system managing method according

to claim 21, further comprising the steps of:

selecting [said other] another user's virtual single-room office on [said]

the screen;

inputting visitation or telephone to [said] the selected [other] user's

virtual single-room office; and

when the visitation or the telephone to [said other] the selected user's

virtual single-room office is inputted, making telephone calls to telephone subscriber numbers

registered beforehand of both the users via a telephone channel board by [said] the server device,

so that telephone communication can be realized between the users.

31.   (Amended) The distributed office system managing method according

to claim 21, further comprising the steps of:

converting a user's image photographed by a camera disposed on said

terminal device to a compressed image with a predetermined number of pixels; and

transmitting the converted image to [said] the server device;

generating a reduced compressed image by reducing the number of

pixels of the received image by [said] the server device;

transmitting the generated reduced compressed image to [said] the

terminal device; and

displaying said transmitted reduced compressed image as [said other]

another user's working situation image in the screen of [said] the terminal device.

32.   (Amended) The distributed office system managing method according

to claim 28, further comprising the steps of:

converting a user's image photographed by a camera disposed on [said]

the terminal device to a compressed image with a predetermined number of pixels;

transmitting the converted image to [said] the server device; and

transmitting the compressed image of the visited user to the visitor's

terminal device by [said] the server device.

33.   (Amended) The distributed office system managing method according

to claim 29, further comprising the steps of:

converting a user's image photographed by a camera disposed on [said]

the terminal device to a compressed image with a predetermined number of pixels;

transmitting the converted image to [said] the server device; and

transmitting the compressed image of the visited user to the visitor's

terminal device by [said] the server device.

34.   (Amended) The distributed office system managing method according

to claim 21, wherein when the working situation image of [the other] another user using a

portable terminal device [having no] not having a camera as [said] the terminal device is

displayed, said step of displaying [said] the information concerning the [other] user's working

situation comprises displaying a user's image registered before hand in [said] the server device.

35.   (Amended) The distributed office system managing method according

to claim 21, wherein said step of displaying [said] the information concerning the [other] user's

working situation comprises the steps of: receiving [said other] the user's working situation

image photographed by a camera disposed on the terminal device; and displaying the image in a

frame rate set by a user's operation.

36.   (Amended) The distributed office system managing method according

to claim 23, further comprising the steps of:

indicating an organization on the screen on which the virtual single-

room offices of the users belonging to the same organization are displayed in the same virtual

office area; and

moving [said] the screen to the virtual office area of the different

organization in accordance with the indication.

37.   (Amended) The distributed office system managing method according

to claim 34, further comprising the steps of:

referring to profile concerning a screen display ability of a portable

information terminal registered in [said] the server device;

generating optimum display data for screen display of [said] the

portable information terminal by [said] the server device; and

transmitting the generated display data to [said] the portable

information terminal, wherein

[said] the portable information terminal displays images of the virtual

single-room office, a virtual office area and a user common space area in accordance with [said]

the received display data.

38.   (Amended) The distributed office system managing method according

to claim 21, wherein [said] the character information concerning the working situation is inputted

by a telephone set ten key, in addition to by [said] the terminal device.

39.   (Amended) The distributed office system managing method according

to claim 21, further comprising the steps of:

setting a user's standard working time by [said] the server device;

sending an instruction for melody sound to [said] the terminal device,

and

receiving [said] the sent instruction for the melody sound by [said] the

terminal device to ring by an attached sound source device the melody sound at a work start time,

a lunch break start time, a lunch break end time, a work end time, and a core time end time for an

ordinary working user.

    40.   (Amended) The distributed office system managing method according

to claim 21, further comprising the steps of:

setting a user's standard rest time or a rest interval time by [said] the

server device;

sending an instruction for melody sound to [said] the terminal device;

and

receiving [said] the sent instruction for the melody sound by [said] the

terminal device to ring a rest promoting melody sound for urging a worker's rest by an attached

sound source device.